

Registered Dental Hygienists Working in Alberta 1991

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August 1992

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Introduction

The Alberta Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) has been responsible for the registration of dental hygienists in the province since November 1990 when the Dental Disciplines Act was proclaimed. In 1991, the ADHA redesigned its membership application form and its membership renewal form to collect more detailed information on education and employment. The revised association forms provided refined measurements on the educational history of dental hygienists and on a number of workforce variables including employment status, practice setting, and areas of primary responsibility at work. The revised association forms were introduced in the annual membership renewal in October 1991. All of the data collected was transferred to the association database.

In collaboration with the ADHA, the workforce planning unit at the Professions and Occupations Bureau undertook an analysis of the education and workforce data on dental hygienists collected by the association in 1991. The analysis was based on association members with active registration residing in Alberta. Highlights of this analysis are given below. A series of tables which provide a more detailed description of the employment characteristics of registered dental hygienists (RDHs) are also included in the report.

Highlights of Membership Data (includes only active members residing in Alberta, N=796)

- The majority of dental hygienists received their degree/diploma in dental hygiene from Alberta (68.0%). A notable percentage received their dental hygiene degree/diploma from another province (24.8%) while a small proportion received their degree/diploma from another country (7.2%), primarily from the United States.
- The average age of dental hygienists was 33 years. Almost one-half of the active members (47.0%) had held a degree/diploma in dental hygiene for 10 years or longer. Close to one third (27.6%) of the active members had held their degree/diploma for less than 5 years.
- A total of 188 (23.6%) RDHs reported having another degree/diploma outside of dental hygiene. Most of these supplemental degrees/diplomas were in dental assisting (28.7%), arts baccalaureate (16.5%), dental therapy (12.8%) or science baccalaureate (11.7%).
- Almost all dental hygienists with active registration (93.8%) were employed on October 1, 1991. Close to one-half (50.1%) were employed on a full-time permanent basis, while 37.9 percent were employed on a part-time permanent basis. Less than 6 percent reported employment in temporary/contract positions. A small number of dental hygienists, 129 (16.2%), reported more than one place of employment. The percentage of unemployed dental hygienists was very low (1.6%).
- The average number of hours worked per week as a dental hygienist during the month of October was 33.7 hours for full-time permanent, 18.4 hours for part-time permanent, 34.4 hours

for full-time temporary/contract and 18.3 hours for part-time temporary/contract.

- The majority of employed dental hygienists worked in a general dentistry practice (80.9%). A much smaller proportion of dental hygienists was employed in a specialty practice setting (7.0%) and in community health (9.6%). The primary area of responsibility for most dental hygienists focused on direct patient care (92.5%), although there was a small percentage of dental hygienists who listed administration (2.5%) or teaching (3.5%) as their primary area of responsibility.
- Dental hygienists were requested to report the number of dentists and the number of dental hygienists working on site at their employment setting. The majority of RDHs reported working in either a one dentist (46.2%) or a two dentist (33.0%) general or specialty practice setting. Among the dental offices which employ dental hygienists, the average number of dental hygienists working on site was 1.6 in a one dentist practice setting and 1.9 in a two dentist practice setting (dental practice settings which employed no dental hygienists were not included in the calculation).
- The employment profile of dental hygienists who had a degree/diploma in dental hygiene for 10 years or longer was notably different from the employment profile of dental hygienists who had recently graduated. Dental hygienists who had their degree/diploma for 10 years or longer were more likely to be employed part-time permanent (55.8%) and less likely to work full-time permanent (37.5%) than those who had their degree/diploma for less than five years (16.9% part-time and 75.3% full-time). In addition, dental hygienists who had their degree/diploma for 10 years or longer were more likely to be employed in community health (15.6%) and have responsibilities relating to teaching (5.7%) and administration (4.8%). Dental hygienists who had their degree/diploma for less than five years were less likely to be employed in community health (2.6%) and to have responsibilities related to teaching/administration (less than 1.0%).

Table 1

Where Degree/Diploma in Dental Hygiene was Obtained 1991*		
	N	(%)
Alberta	537	68.0
Out of Province	196	24.8
Out of Country	57	7.2
Total	790	100

* Data is based on Alberta members with active registration (n=796). Information on location of degree was missing for 6 members.

Table 2

Number of Years with Degree/Diploma in Dental Hygiene 1991*		
	N	(%)
Less than 5 years (graduated 1988-1992)	215	27.6
5-10 years (graduated 1982-1987)	198	25.4
More that 10 years (graduated 1953-1981)	366	47.0
Total	779	100

* Data is based on Alberta members with active registration. Information on year of graduation was missing for 17 members.

Table 3

Supplemental Degrees/Diplomas Outside of Dental Hygiene 1991*		
Degree/Diploma	N	(%)
Dental Assistant	54	28.7
Dental Therapy	24	12.8
B.Sc.	22	11.7
B.A.	31	16.5
B.Ed.	17	9.1
Other	40	21.3
Total	188	100

* 188 (23.6%) out of a total of 796 active Alberta members reported having a supplemental degree or diploma.

Table 4

Employment Status of Alberta Members with Active Registration October, 1991*		
Employed:	N	(%)
Full-time Permanent	355	50.1
Part-time Permanent	268	37.9
Full-time Temporary/Contract	20	2.8
Part-time Temporary/Contract	21	3.0
Not Employed in Dental Hygiene and:		
Seeking Employment in dental hygiene	11	1.6
On Maternity Leave	15	2.1
Other	18	2.5
Total	708	100

* Data on employment status was missing for 88 active Alberta members.

Table 5

Average Number of Hours Worked Per Week October, 1991*	
	# of hours
Full-time Permanent	33.7
Part-time Permanent	18.4
Full-time Temporary/Contract	34.4
Part-time Temporary/Contract	18.3

Table 6

Number of Dentists Reported by Dental Hygienists to be Working on Site at their Employment Setting October, 1991*		
Number of Dentists Working on Site:	# of hygienists reporting	(%)
1 Dentist	248	46.2
2 Dentists	177	33.0
3 Dentists	67	12.5
4 Dentists	35	6.5
5 Dentists	10	1.9
Total	537	100

* Only dental hygienists employed in a general or specialty practice setting (n=578) were included in the analysis. Data on the number of dentists employed on site was missing for 41 hygienists. No dental hygienists reported more than 5 dentists working on site.

Table 7

Average Number of Dental Hygienists Employed October, 1991*	
Number of Dentists Working on Site:	Average Number of Dental Hygienists:
1 Dentist	1.6
2 Dentists	1.9
3 Dentists	2.5
4 Dentists	2.7

* The calculation of the average number of dental hygienists working on site includes only general or specialty practice settings which employed one or more dental hygienists. The number of practice settings reported with 5 dentists on site was too small to allow for a valid calculation of the average number of hygienists.

Table 8

Employment Status by Number of Years Since Graduation with a Degree/Diploma in Dental Hygiene October, 1991*				
	Number of Years Since Graduation			Total
Employment Status	more than 10 years	5-10 years	less than 5 years	
Full-time Permanent	123 (37.5%)	109 (64.5%)	116 (75.3%)	348 (53.5%)
Part-time Permanent	183 (55.8%)	53 (31.4%)	26 (16.9%)	262 (40.3%)
Full-time Temp/Contract	6 (1.8%)	4 (2.4%)	10 (6.5%)	20 (3.1%)
Part-time Temp/Contract	16 (4.9%)	3 (1.8%)	2 (1.3%)	21 (3.2%)
Total	328 (100%)	169 (100%)	154 (100%)	651 (100%)

* Table is missing data on 13 employed dental hygienists.

Table 9

Practice Setting by Number of Years Since Graduation with a Degree/Diploma in Dental Hygiene October, 1991*				
	Number of Years Since Graduation			Total
Practice Setting	more than 10 years	5-10 years	less than 5 years	
General Dentistry	235 (73.4%)	143 (84.6%)	143 (92.3%)	521 (80.9%)
Specialty Dentistry	21 (6.6%)	17 (10.1%)	7 (4.5%)	45 (7.0%)
Community Health	50 (15.6%)	8 (4.7%)	4 (2.6%)	62 (9.6%)
Technical Instit./University	10 (3.1%)	1 (.6%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (1.7%)
Other	4 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)	5 (0.8%)
Total	320 (100%)	169 (100%)	155 (100%)	644 (100%)

* Table is missing data on 20 employed dental hygienists.

Table 10

Primary Area of Responsibility at Work by Number of Years Since Graduation with a Degree/Diploma in Dental Hygiene October, 1991*				
	Number of Years Since Graduation			Total
Primary Area of Responsibility:	more that 10 years	5-10 years	less than 5 years	
Direct Patient Care	273 (86.7%)	164 (97.6%)	152 (98.7%)	589 (92.5%)
Administration	15 (4.8%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (2.5%)
Teaching	18 (5.7%)	3 (1.8%)	1 (0.7%)	22 (3.5%)
Other	9 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)	10 (1.6%)
Total	315 (100%)	168 (100%)	154 (100%)	637 (100%)

* Table is missing data on 27 employed dental hygienists.